

THE PLOTHOLDER

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk

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Autumn Social

Sunday 21st
September
11.30am –
1.30pm

Produce Show,
Pumpkin,
Sunflower and
Scarecrow
Competitions,
BBQ, Grand
Raffle, Beer
Tent, Home
Produce Stall –
and the Seed
Store Café!

Turned out nice... *by Jenny Bourne*

Seedy Sunday and Plant Sale

We were lucky with good weather for the first two RPA social events this year – Seedy Sunday in March and the Plant and Seedling Sale in May. Seedy Sunday turned out nice for the time of year, seeds and hazel coppicing supports sold well, making a tidy £78.88



and an enjoyable first RPA social and community event.

Volunteers turned up early to help out at the Plant Sale on May 4th and to put up the gala tents, though the good weather meant we decided to go 'al fresco'! There was a good selection of donated plants – the usual suspects: beans, tomatoes, peppers, squash flying off the shelves, but leeks were in demand – memo to all to sow a few extra seeds for next year! Thanks to Ruth and to everyone who helped out on the stalls, setting up and clearing away – it was good to have the younger generation stepping up to the mark to help out this year – special thanks to Bethan and Jack!

Good weather, great turn-out, the usual delicious cakes and refreshments in the café – a really well organised and enjoyable event and it was a bonus to make a net profit of £213.78 from the sale, in addition to the café's totals. The success of these events is dependent on volunteers who contribute time and energy to supporting our RPA social and community life – we're always in need of more plotholders to volunteer for our social events on the day, even if for half an hour or so. [More Autumn Social details on page 2](#)

Send contributions for the next newsletter to jenbourne@btinternet.com

News from your Committee

WELCOME TO NEW TENANTS

Lucy Jakubowska (plot 184b); Stuart Wisdom (plot 74); David and Clare Allen (plot 114); Paul Jarman (plot 107); James Oakley and Ben Bennett (plot 112); Paul & Rebecca Sayce (plot 41b); Alasdair and Corrina Turner (plot 164b); Jane Crowther (plot 165b); Mimoza Rama (plot 191f); Laura Stafford (plot 192b); Sheila Butler (plot 195f).

THE OFFICE Open every Sunday, 11am – 12 noon.

THE PLOTHOLDERS' COMMITTEE

David Harnden, Chair (plot 152)
Chris Nix, Vice-Chair (plots 12f, 146f)
Helen Nix, Secretary (plots 12f, 146f)
Carol Dukes, Treasurer and Website (plot 77)
Jenny Bourne, Social Secretary (plots 27f, 28b)
Alan Buckingham, Website (plot 185f)
Ashley Catto, Sheds (plots A,H)
Gill Hiley, Lettings (plot 50)
Barry Houlston (plot 133b)
Nick Baylis (plot 110f)

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Council appointees: Tania Mathias, Jonathan Cardy, Jerry Elloy (Vice-Chair), Gareth Evans
Tenants: David Harnden (Chair), Susan Saunders (Secretary), Carol Dukes, Barry Houlston

■ Bob Trevillion has retired from the RPA Plotters Committee (and the Management Committee) as he needs more time to devote to personal and private issues. David Harnden is the new Chair with Chris Nix as Vice-Chair. (see tribute below)

The Autumn Social – see you there!

This year's Autumn Social is on Sunday 21st September, 11.30am – 1.30pm

Produce Show, Pumpkin, Sunflower and Scarecrow competitions, BBQ, Grand Raffle, Beer Tent and the Home Produce stall – if you're making jams, chutneys, preserves etc right now please keep aside a few jars to donate – we will sell what you make!

A small team organises the Social and your support will be most welcome to ensure that it all runs smoothly and everyone enjoys it – it's a great opportunity to take part in our flourishing RPA community life!



Contacts:

Produce Show: Ruth Walker and Sue Croft
ruthruthwalker@blueyonder.co.uk;
sue_croft@btinternet.com

Raffle: Joanie Fulton and Gaby Armstrong
fultonjoanie@hotmail.com
gaby.armstrong1@gmail.com

BBQ: Sue Croft

For all else: jennifer@btinternet.com



George Loosemore remembers...

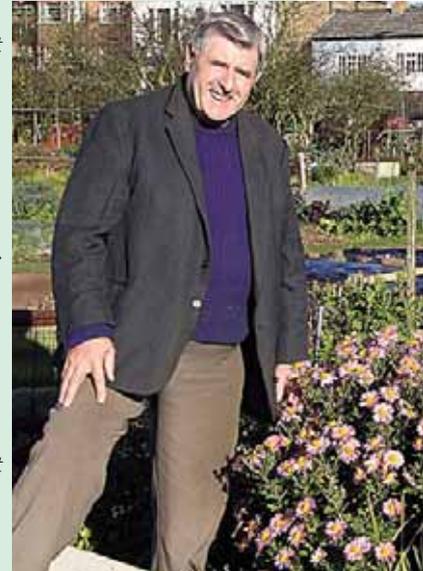
Jenny Bourne asked George, plot 75, to recall the highlights of his 33 years on his plots... and here it is in his own inimitable style, entitled

'Memoirs from the Madhouse'

"Jenny – the only things I know about the allotment, it was given to us in 1921 and the time a car hit the wall in the 70s I was told and the Hampton Wick Cricket Club had a fire not sure if it was just damage or burn down.

At the time the committee put £50 towards the building.

We had a big pond near Park Road on the allotment. Mr Derek Shail told me all about it Derek Shail who had a plot and half plot I think, not sure. Then another plotholder name Albert came to the allotment had a plot. Also look after a cat which we call it the allotment cat. When Albert could not come to feed the cat he ask people for help to feed the cat myself I done it for him on a Christmas morning it was cold and ice-snow on the grounds.



On my plot 75 I know I have a drainage, because one day I started to dig my plot 75 found out and saw I had this drainage running from Park Road.

In the old days it was call Park Lane Road because when it rain it was only a small lane and always flooded. In those days so who it was put a new road and it was call Park Road I was told so this I think the drainage was put in to the allotment running along my plots.

And with the rest of all the trouble we had on the allotment sheds damage and our seed building burn down and deer running on the allotment.

This is all I know Jenny." George.

(All this, and more. Newsletter readers may remember the story of George seeing off the crooks who tried to take the steel roof supports during the Seed Store rebuild last year, among many other good deeds. He has baked cakes for the café, looked after the incinerator and undertaken the emptying of the chemical toilets.

George had two full plots until recently, but has scaled back due to health difficulties. He has kept a watchful eye on the whole site for many years, has helped many individual plot holders, and we owe him an enormous debt for his care of the site).

Chairman Bob

Bob Trevillion was chair for several years and, as many of you will know, gave a huge amount of time and effort to ensuring the smooth running of the allotments. On behalf of all plotters, the committee would like to thank Bob for all his contributions. We remain hopeful that, at some time in the future, we will be able to entice Bob back onto the committee.

Scouts' visit, June 2014

The First Teddington Scouts visit the RPA

A group of scouts, led by Alex Rigge, visited the site on Wednesday evening, 25th June, to get a taste of allotment life. They were introduced to raspberry picking and potato digging on Liz and Gray Rigge's plot, with spoils to match – yum! Gray gave a demonstration of pump use and some willing volunteers put their backs into it! Chris Pocock showed them around the compost toilet, with some audience apprehension – the end results turned out to be clean, quality compost! Lots of fun was had watering Erica's plot with water, buckets and scouts flying in all directions! Maybe this introduction to allotment life will inspire some of The First Teddington Scouts to become the next generation of plot holders! Thanks to Chris, Erica, Gray and Liz for arranging the evening with Alex.

Jenny Bourne, Social Secretary



Above and right: picking (and enjoying?) raspberries



Left: Alex Rigge and raspberry pickers



Gray Rigge demonstrates how the pumps operate



Lifting potatoes on Liz and Gray's plot



Left and above: Chris Pocock, who was responsible for the design and oversaw the construction of the compost toilet, explains its mysteries

Thanks to Jenny Bourne for taking the photographs of this educational visit. More on the RPA website at www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk

Swarm!

Great excitement on Friday 16 May – a plotholder spotted a bee swarm in a hazel tree next to his plot in the coppice area – luckily Fred the beekeeper was on site and he came to the rescue in full kit.



He said that when a hive is about to swarm there are indicators if you know what signs to look out for.

Fred got to work and very quickly the swarm was gently knocked off the tree and into his box – a box full of very noisy and agitated bees! Fred advised the

neighbouring plotholder to come back later as the remaining bees that hadn't been collected would be confused and lost.

Here's the sequence of events with Fred to the rescue.



Dandelion Wine by Carol Dukas

If you can't beat them...

With dandelions stretching as far as the eye could see this spring I decided that a change of attitude was needed. So from henceforth on Plot 77 dandelions are no longer weeds; they're crops. Problem solved!

Dandelion wine

(recipe from 'First Steps in Winemaking' by C.J.J. Berry)

- 2 quarts of dandelion heads
- 3 lbs white sugar
- 4 oranges
- Yeast
- Yeast nutrient
- 1 gallon water



It is important that the flowers should be picked in sunshine or at midday when they are fully opened, and the making of the wine should be done immediately.

Measure the yellow heads, discarding as much green as possible (without being too fussy about it), bringing the water to the boil meanwhile. Pour the boiling water over the flowers and leave them to steep for two days. Be careful not to exceed this time or a curious odour often invades and spoils what is a most pleasant table wine, properly made.

Boil the mixture for ten minutes with the orange peel (no white pith) and strain on to the sugar, stirring to dissolve it. When cool add the yeast nutrient, juice from the oranges and yeast. Put into a fermentation jar and fit trap, and siphon off into clean bottles when the wine has cleared. It will be just right for drinking with your Christmas poultry.

So says Mr C.J.J. Berry. We'll find out at Christmas if he's right.

By the way, I source my winemaking supplies at www.brewingathome.co.uk and I use sterilised screw-top wine bottles – the whole corking thing was a right palaver!

The Pride of Plottolders

The Hampton Wick Festival takes place in the High Street on Sunday August 10th. Last year was fantastic with live music, circus performers, Tudors, vintage cars, crafts and street food.

We were invited to field a contingent of plottolders in the Grand Parade and we had great fun. Join us this year to show support for our local community. The Grand Parade takes place from 12.30 – 1pm and we'll muster at about 12noon. Everyone welcome – the more the merrier!

Contact jenbourne@btinternet.com. Full details at: www.hwfestival.org.uk



A Plot in the Dark:

A Mrs Maple Detective Story

by Helen Nix

Chapter Two: the plot thickens.

The tension in the air was palpable as the plot holders gathered in the cosy pub, complete with horse brasses and open fire. Carl Hooper, self-appointed head of PlotWatch stood up, and coughed loudly to bring the loudly muttering group to order.

“Quieten down, everyone please! Now we all know what we’re about here, this is about cracking down on the petty crimes that have been blighting our plots.” He was interrupted by several cries of ‘Hear, hear’. He raised his hand, before continuing. “As you know, our local police have been informed of the crimes, but have been unable to take action. I suggest we start a PlotWatch rota to man our plots at all times to stop these crimes happening.”

There was a bit of an uneasy pause. “All times?” asked a dark haired woman, her accent clearly declaring her a daughter of Essex.

“Yes, Renee. All times. This criminal is striking day and night, and we must be ready and able to strike back to the same timetable.”

“But how would we strike back?” she asked. “I don’t think I could wrest a thief to the ground, not with my back, and especially not at 2 in the morning. I’ve got kids to get to school afterwards.” This was met with nods of approval on all sides.

Carl rallied. “We all have commitments,” he said. “Do you want to be able to grow food for your children in safety or not? Of all people, I would have thought you would be most concerned. After all – you had the most valuable item stolen. A handbag!” There was a sharp intake of breath from all the plotters.

“A handbag?” asked Mrs Maple, leaning forward in her seat.

“Well, yes,” said Renee. “But that’s the funny thing. The thief returned it a day later. All that was really stolen was my bookmark. So it isn’t quite the burglary I thought. My purse, my cards, my things, they were all still there.”

“What else has been stolen?” asked Mrs Maple. “Lots of things,” said Carl. “Renee’s bag and bookmark, Miss Toni’s Croc, Louis’s Boule, Ted’s

vintage trowel... a real spate.”

Mrs Maple furrowed. “Everything small, of low financial value, and no obvious link between them. Do the victims of these crimes have anything in common?” Her sharp eye passed from victim to victim. Miss Toni was young, willowy and blonde and had the casual elegance that only a great deal of time and money can bestow. Renee was in her 40s, curvaceous and giggly, with the round face of one who has truly enjoyed living. Louis was young, dark-haired and hippyish in his black turtleneck jumper and jeans, and had a tendency to tap his feet constantly. Finally, Ted was one of those old men who was probably more active in retirement than he ever had been in work: he wore a green pullover which looked about as old as he was. If there was a link between these four souls, it wasn’t an obvious one.

Carl looked at her archly. “Well, if the amateur detective would let us get on... ”

“Oh, I’m terribly sorry dear, yes. I don’t want to hold up your meeting, at all, not when you’ve got such important things to discuss. But I couldn’t help but wonder... ”

“Yes?” Carl asked sharply.

“Well, as our local constabulary haven’t had the resources to help us in our hour of need, I wonder if I might make some discreet enquiries to see if I can generate any leads? I’m no detective, but I have read an awful lot of crime fiction, and I can usually work out the culprit. Would the four people who have had things stolen from them be willing to speak to me about it?”

The disparate group of four nodded.

“Well then, on Sunday morning I will pop round to all your plots and ask you each some questions about what happened. I will start with the most unusual case. The handbag incident.”



What's in our water?

Martin Dawson, one of our ploholders, is undertaking a survey of the water in our pumps across the site as part of the 'Pollcurb' research project being carried out by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

The Pollcurb project aims to improve understanding of the complex impacts of increasing urbanisation on water resources and pollution. The project is focused on the Thames river basin where projections of future population and climate indicate serious water stress.



Martin is sampling the groundwater aquifer in the Kempton Park Gravels that lie under the allotments and which feed our water pumps. The closely spaced series of pumps/boreholes allows an assessment of variation across the site, which could be related to the

use of fertilizer on the cricket pitch next door, or the proximity of buildings. Repeat sampling at other dates in the summer should show whether there is a variation in time, perhaps in response to drier weather.

The sampling has been done using an automated probe which is configured to measure indicators of solids such as nitrates and phosphates, chlorophyll (which indicates organic pollution), tryptophan (which indicates pollution by sewage), and temperature, pH and oxygen saturation.

Early results suggest that:

- Levels of tryptophans and chlorophyll are lower than those found in the Thames and close to levels regarded as pollution-free. **This doesn't make it drinking water!**

- There is no evidence that fertilizer use in adjacent areas is having any effect on our water.

- The water is lightly alkaline, although less so than the Thames.

- In summary the current water quality is generally high and comparable to river source regarded as good to very good. Nonetheless **do not drink it!**

- *Martin's full write-up is available in the Seed Store and in the Shed by the main gate.*



Nature Watch – RPA Blog

The RPA website (www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk) has been buzzing and fluttering over the last few months – with Jenny Bourne's nature blog capturing the wildlife and nature at large on our site. It's not only the beautiful pictures she takes, her descriptions



and comments bring the passage of the seasons and the visits of creatures both common and unusual, to our attention.

For all things wildlife and nature related at our site check out Jenny's blog – from very hungry mullein moth caterpillars (*right*) to resident smooth newts and frogs in the pump bath and a rogue goldfish. Keep up with regular updates on what's going on in the wonderful world of RPA wildlife!



Top:
small skipper
butterflies

Above:
mullein moth
caterpillar

Left:
a juvenile
robin

Below left:
a damselfly

Your contributions, sightings, photos and thoughts are very welcome!

Contact jenbourne@btinternet.com



How to contact us:

You can leave mail for the Committee in the letterbox in the shed by the gate, or email us via our website

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk